

Doppelganger

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Summary: The search for missing teenagers and a vicious killer brings Nick face to face with someone familiar

1. Chapter 1

Doppelganger

Pt. 1

In a place unknown

Voices echoed down the corridor, some muted and somber, some sharp and angry. Nico stalked along, the argument with his father and brother still fresh in his head. He glanced at the palace guard, in position around the King's quarters, watching eagle-eyed as individuals marched past. His commander's station, beside the throne room, was filled with chattering members of the cadre â€“ all waiting for him.

"About time you got here, Nico" the Dark Lady, commander of the King's guard, sat on her seat, absently stroking her golden cat as she reviewed a document. "We have received a request from the Village of Montview, a report of children missing. They ask if we can help them in their search."

"Montview?" Nico asked, raising an eyebrow. "Isn't that one of those "religious" communitys? The kind that have tried very hard to be ignored by the King?"

The Lady smiled thinly. "Yes â€“ well it seems that having six of your children disappear makes the rule of the King seem palatable after all. Our on-site investigators believe that someone opened a door into another realm for them. You're the only one of your cadre that has traveled between realms so I need you to go and see if you can pick up their trail."

"And if I find them?" he asked, quizzically.

"It depends on what the circumstances are when you find them." The Lady waved off the others and waited until the door closed. She pushed a document across the desk with one long fingernail. "There are circumstances here that I would prefer the others not hear. It is best of we keep this search between us. This is something I'd prefer your father not hear of the details of this incident."

"Why? He is the King's Justice Minister â€“ shouldn't he know about this?"

"Because it might bring back bad memories and because I don't want to deal with his issues right now, especially if what I suspect is correct. Just go, find the kids and bring them back."

"By your command, my Lady."

Portland

Nick Burkhardt and his partner Hank Griffin examined the crime scene with practiced eyes. It was a bloody mess, the body ripped apart, piece of flesh and bone strewn around the park. "Think this is Wessen related?" Hank asked, quietly.

"Maybe. We'll know more once we identify the victim." Nick circled the remains carefully, trying to see if there were clues his Grimm abilities might pick up.

Sgt. Wu joined them, a confused look on his face. "How did you get over here so quick?" he asked, looking at Nick.

Hank frowned. "What are you talking about? We've been here for a while."

Wu shook his head emphatically. "No, I saw you standing just outside the crime scene tape not five minutes ago."

Nick and Hank looked at each other in confusion. "Where exactly were you when you think you saw me?" Nick asked, his eyes sweeping the area.

"Just there" Wu pointed. "Right where you are still standing."

Nick and Hank stared in surprise. At the edge of the crowd a tall figure in leather jacket and black jeans was standing, watching the proceedings with interest. His hair was longer and he wore a five o'clock shadow but other than that he bore a striking resemblance to one of their own â€“ to Nick Burkhardt.

2. Chapter 2

Pt. 2

Nico looked down at the scene, automatically cataloging the blood, the body parts and the police presence. He wasn't sure why the gate had opened in this park, right in the middle of some sort of criminal investigation but he had a feeling it had something to do with the missing teens. His eyes were drawn to a group of men on the edge of

the scene, the uniformed officer who had hailed him just moments ago and two others. Even from this distance he could see that one of them bore a striking resemblance to himself. "Well, isn't that interesting" he thought to himself. "Wonder if dear old dad visited here after 'mommy dearest' tried to kill me?" He saw that the men were starting to come up the hill towards him. "Time to find myself a place to hide."

"Hey, you!" Hank called out as the stranger turned and started away. Nick's double didn't stop, walking up to a large motorcycle parked on the edge of the park. He jumped on it and roared away before Nick or his partner could catch up.

"You saw that, right?" Nick said, making note of the bike's Canadian plate. "He looked just like me!"

Hank watched the bike disappear. "Do you have a brother or cousin in Canada?"

"Not that I know of." Nick looked back at the crime scene. "My parents never talked about having any family in Canada but I don't really know much about my mother's side of the family."

Wu walked up, looking at Nick curiously. "That was different. Coroner is here for the body and we're still interviewing possible witnesses. Maybe we'll get lucky but I'm not holding my breath. This park is not in the best of neighborhoods."

Hank and Nick watched as the body parts were collected and put in the Coroner's wagon, then started back to the station, discussing the case and whether a Wesson might be involved. Lately it seemed like every case had some Wesson connection. Nick was getting better at figuring out what the Wesson might be â€“ or getting Monroe and Rosalie to figure it out for him. Not that it meant that this case was related to Wesson's. It might actually be just some drug-addled nut case who had lost his mind and went after some poor tourist unlucky enough to run into him. But what were the odds?

3. Chapter 3

Pt. 3

The trip back from the crime scene had been silent at best. Nick was still trying to wrap his mind around seeing his own face looking back at him, walking away from his own pair of legs. As far as he knew he had no living relatives, no cousins who might resemble him, no family at all he could call on except his mother Kelly â€“ who wasn't available at the moment.

Hank watched his partner out of the corner of his eye, frowning. "I'll run the license plate on that bike" he said as they entered the precinct. "Maybe we can figure out who your double really is."

"Or maybe we could just ask him" Nick said, staring in disbelief at the figure lounging at their shared desk. Anyone walking by would have sworn that Detective Nick Burkhardt was seated in front of his computer, eyes closed with his arms crossed across his chest and his long legs propped up on another chair. Capt. Renard was standing behind the chair, an annoyed look on his face, a look that changed to

astonishment as Nick and Hank entered the room.

"What theâ€¢!" Renard snarled, putting his hand on the man's shoulder.

The stranger's reactions were quick, faster than Nick had seen even among the assorted Wessens he had dealt with. In the blink of an eye, the man's eyes had opened and he had grabbed their captain's wrist, flowing out of the chair to break the captain's grip on him. "Don't touch" the stranger's voice â€“ Nick's voice â€“ said quietly.

"Hey!" Hank called out, moving quickly to Renard's side. "What the hell do you think you're doing?"

"Keeping from being manhandled " Nick's double said, raising one eyebrow as he stared at Renard. "If you wanted my attention, all you had to do was talk to me â€“ preferably from in front where I could see you."

"Just who the hell are you?" Nick asked, moving to stand in front of his duplicate.

"Nico Ainsley. I'm a detective in Yellowknife, Northwest Territories, Canada. And you would be?" Nico looked his doppelganger up and down, his expression amused. His double's physical resemblance wasn't as striking to him up close as it had been in the park. There was something still so "innocent" about the man â€“ something Nico hadn't had in a while.

"Nick Burkhardt. This is too freaking strange." Nick also took the opportunity to examine his counterpart closely. They were almost identical â€“ almost. Nico was slightly taller, slightly leaner, slightly tanner with longer hair. And if that wasn't enough, he was dressed better, with a silk shirt, and expensive leather jacket and boots. Nick frowned as he looked into Nico's eyes, seeing "something" different in them, but not sure what. He couldn't be sure if the man was Wessen or not but there was something there that needed explanation.

"Detective Ainsley â€“ I'm Capt. Renard." Sean Renard's voice was cold. He was not a man accustomed to being pushed off and the young Canadian's reaction had annoyed him greatly.

"My apologies" Nico said, not sounding in the slightest bit sorry. "I don't like being touched by strangers. It's an old phobia of mine from when I was military." He smiled, showing very white and very straight teeth. "Can we begin again?"

"What can we do for you, Detective Ainsley" Hank asked, suspiciously.

"I'm here at the request of a small community in the Territories. A few days ago six of their teenagers disappeared from the town with no trace. One of their family members found information on Portland in their daughter's room. They suspect the kids have run off to be with someone here in your city. The oldest of the teens is 16 but the youngest is barely 12 so you can see why they are concerned."

"Why haven't we heard about this before now?" Renard asked, still

suspicious of this stranger in their midst.

"The community is religious â€“ much like your Amish communities. They tend to keep to themselves and try to have no communication with anyone not of their faith. I think that if one of the kids hadn't been about to age out of their version of foster care they might never have said a word at all. They would have written the kids out of their church's history and told the parents that they had no such youngsters. But the kid coming out of foster care had sent notes to one of my fellow officers asking for help in re-locating out of the community and when he didn't show up for their appointmentâ€|"

"Then your guy went looking for him" Nick finished his statement somberly. "But that still doesn't answer why the Captain hasn't heard anything about this. Shouldn't there be some notification out asking other jurisdictions to be on the lookout for them?"

Nico sighed. He hated to lie, especially since it meant he'd have to alter reality to cover his words, but this situation was leaving him no choice. "Probably the notice was hung up somewhere. In any event, I'm not here in an official capacity. The officer who took the first report is a friend and since I was coming this way anyway I told him I'd look around." He pressed the thought of this being a "normal" situation into the heads of the mortals in front of him, frowning as he found at least two minds that were somewhat resistant to his words. The captain was not exactly what he was presenting, hiding a face Nico could just barely see under the man's facade, a face he thought he recognized. His duplicate, Nick, was also surprisingly resistant to taking the story in, though he allowed the words into his mind eventually. "Interesting" Nico thought. "I'll have to look into thisâ€|"

That was when things went from odd to really odd.

End
file.